

# NORTH SHORE YOUNG CIVIC FORUM 4.0



PROGRAM  
REPORT  
2024

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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The North Shore Young Civic Forum takes place on the unceded lands of the Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and sə́lilwə́taʔ (Tseil-Waututh) First Nations. While the Forum is designed to empower young people on the North Shore to engage with and influence their municipal governments, different forms of governance have been practiced on the North Shore for thousands of years by the Coast Salish Peoples. An important goal of the Forum this year has been to provide Forum participants with the opportunity to learn from and with representatives of local First Nations.

We are deeply grateful to the people of the Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh and sə́lilwə́taʔ Nations that have come and shared their knowledge and wisdom with the Forum and its participants. First Nations governments play a critical role in the current political landscape. Non-Indigenous people wishing to walk down the path of Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada must make the time and effort to learn about First Nations governments, their people and history.

North Shore Community Resources  
2024



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The North Shore Young Civic Forum (NSYCF) seeks to bridge the gap between young North Shore residents (aged 18-39) and their municipal governments, enhancing civic engagement in a demographic often underrepresented in municipal governance. The program equips participants with the knowledge and tools necessary to contribute meaningfully to local governance, fostering a more representative policy environment.

## PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS

The NSYCF's mission is to empower young adults to actively participate in municipal governance on the North Shore. Delivered by North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) through the Democracy Cafe Program, the goals include increasing civic knowledge, developing engagement skills, and fostering connections between young residents and local governments.

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## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 100 alumni from four successful cohorts.
- Collaborations with three municipal governments, contributing 16 recommendations to councils.
- 100% of participants reported increased understanding of municipal governance.

The NSYCF has educated youth about municipal governance while enabling them to contribute to policy discussions, engage with municipal leaders, and gain confidence in civic participation.

# PROGRAM DESIGN

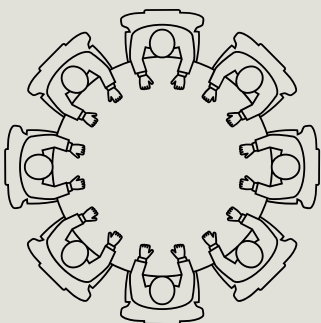
Since 2019, the Forum has run four cohorts, adapting its delivery to challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants engage with municipal leaders, learn about local governance operations, and contribute to public projects. Sessions held at municipal halls and community spaces have covered topics such as municipal roles, First Nations relationships, and local advocacy. The diverse cohort composition ensures varied perspectives, enriching discussions and project outcomes.

NSYCF employs a blend of civic education, public engagement, and experiential learning to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application. Sessions include direct engagement with mayors, councillors, and municipal staff, scenario-based exercises, and group projects presented to councils, using the Knowledge-to-Action Framework to encourage practical application.

## PROJECT THEMES AND PRESENTATION DATES

In 2024, 26 participants worked on projects addressing issues like housing, youth accessibility, and reconciliation.

Participants formed groups based on their municipalities, developed actionable solutions using the SMART goals framework, and presented these to city councils from late June to July. Council responses were positive, recognizing the value of young resident engagement.



# LOOKING AHEAD

NSYCF's success is due to collaboration with municipal governments, community organizations, and dedicated facilitators. Key lessons include the value of in-person engagement and flexibility for participants with busy schedules. Future opportunities include tracking project recommendations' implementation by municipalities and expanding partnerships to enhance program impact. As the Forum grows, future cohorts will contribute to shaping the North Shore community further.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY



- Long-term Vision - Expand topics to include environmental sustainability, mental health, and economic development, allowing participants to influence emerging policy areas.



- Tracking Implementation - Future cohorts will track the implementation of previous recommendations to ensure continuity and demonstrate impact.



- Community Engagement - Alumni will be encouraged to join municipal committees, and the NSYCF will expand partnerships with non-profits to support community initiatives.

The North Shore Young Civic Forum continues to empower young adults to shape their community's future actively.

# OVERVIEW

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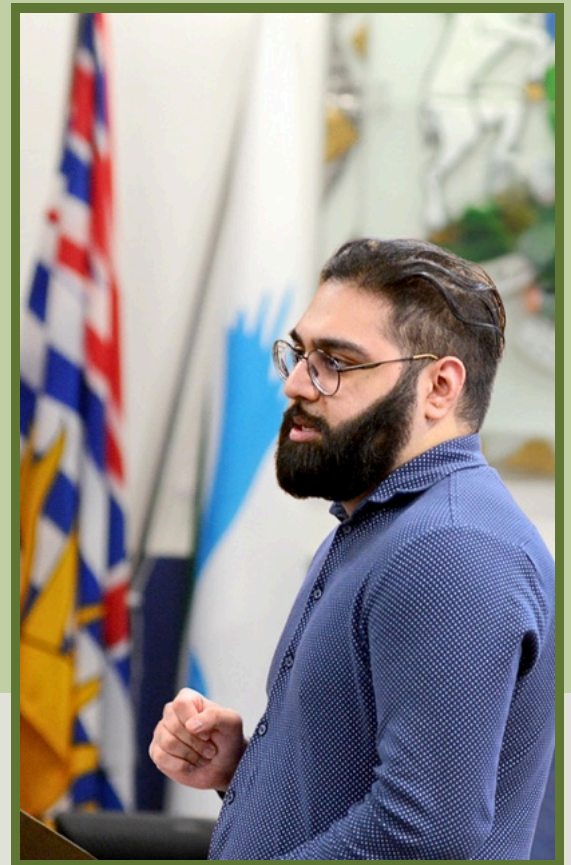
## FORUM PURPOSE

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The purpose of the North Shore Young Civic Forum (the “Forum”) is to increase the engagement of 18–39-year-olds on the North Shore with their municipal governments. Young people are typically less engaged with their municipal governments than middle-aged and elderly individuals; they vote at lower rates in municipal elections, are less likely to attend city council meetings or participate in public processes such as public hearings.

Due to this lack of engagement, municipal public policy tends not to reflect the priorities of younger residents. The North Shore Young Civic Forum aims to bridge the gap between the three North Shore municipalities and younger North Shore residents by increasing their capacity to understand, engage with and influence their local governments.

The Forum is part of the Democracy Café program at North Shore Community Resources (NSCR). Democracy Café is a non-partisan program that encourages residents and citizens to more actively participate in civic life while encouraging governments to better facilitate citizen and resident participation in decision making.



## FORUM HISTORY

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The Forum was launched after a 2017 roundtable NSCR hosted on affordable housing on the North Shore. The attendees under 45 wanted to participate more in local governance but didn’t have the knowledge or skills to participate in municipal public processes. The Forum was created to equip young people with the tools, information and networks necessary to better engage with and influence decision makers in their local governments.

People are eligible to participate in the Forum if they live, study, or work in one of the three North Shore municipalities: the District of North Vancouver, the City of North Vancouver, and the District of West Vancouver.





This report represents the work of the fourth cohort of the Forum. The first Forum in 2019, brought together 30 participants over six sessions to learn about their local governments. Participants in the first cohort collaborated to create 16 recommendations presented to North Shore municipalities on how to better engage residents 18-39.

The second Forum ran from late 2020 into early 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire cohort participated virtually including on-line presentations to council. The second Forum was the first cohort in which participants split into municipality-based groups to create separate group projects. The groups produced projects that addressed one of three topics:

- 1 Belonging**
- 2 Sustainable Transportation and Mobility**
- 3 Housing Affordability and Access**

In 2022, the Forum's third cohort, utilized a hybrid approach incorporating on-line and in-person sessions as public health restrictions were relaxed. Forum groups produced projects proposing a new cycling route through the City of North Vancouver, improving the infrastructure at Ambleside Beach to be more youth-friendly, and making local politics more accessible, among other projects.

This fourth cohort brought together over 25 who work, live or study on the North Shore. More details about the 2024 Forum cohort is provided below.

The Forum now has approximately 100 alumni from its four cohorts. Forum alumni have served on committees at all three North Shore municipalities, and two alumni have gone on to stand as candidates for election to municipal council. Four alumni have returned to work as an Alumni Facilitator, a junior facilitator position to assist those running the program with their experience. For the first three Forum cohorts, NSCR partnered with CityHive to design and deliver the Forum experience. We are grateful for our strong collaboration with CityHive. For this fourth cohort, NSCR was solely responsible for the Forum.



# FORUM THEORY OF PRACTICE

The North Shore Young Civic Forum utilizes engagement and civic education practices to achieve its purpose including facilitation, dialogue, and relationship-building. These practices help break down barriers between Forum participants and their municipal governments. Forum sessions occur at municipal halls and other public places allowing participants to learn about municipal systems, structures and governance where local government happens while providing Forum participants meaningful opportunities to build relationships with mayors, municipal councillors and their staff who lead municipal governments.

The program's civic education seeks to provide participants with the knowledge and understanding necessary to participate in municipal governance. These lessons inform participants how municipalities work, clarify the context in which municipalities operate and equip participants with the tools they need to engage with and influence local government decision makers.

Utilizing a Knowledge-to-Action framework, the Forum seeks to provide participants with useful knowledge about local government while also providing meaningful opportunities to apply their learning to practical applications of real-life issues at the local government level. This experiential education approach moves beyond a theoretical approach so that Forum participants can make meaningful contributions to civic life through their project work.

During program sessions, participants meet directly with mayors, municipal councillors, and municipal staff in both formal and informal settings, other knowledge experts and present on their projects to a municipal council to advocate for changes or share knowledge with decision makers.



# NORTH SHORE YOUNG CIVIC FORUM 4.0

## WORKING WITH MUNICIPALITIES

One of the Forum's strengths has been its close working relationship with the three local municipal governments on the North Shore. As in past years, the 2024 Forum facilitators worked closely with municipal staff at the City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, and District of West Vancouver to develop workshops for the program, organize sessions at municipal halls, shape the guidelines for the project phase, and arrange for groups to present to Councils. Council members and municipal staff were generous with their time, knowledge, and advice to Forum facilitators and participants, with many attending the sessions at their municipal halls to personally engage with and talk to the cohort. We deeply appreciate the close working relationships with all three municipalities and extend our thanks for their support and collaboration.

## FACILITATION TEAM

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The program was co-led by Hassan Merali and Raksh Kainth, who were contracted by NSCR and came together as Co-Facilitators in November 2023. The Co-Facilitators designed the program, coordinated the promotion, recruitment, and selection processes, organized the program structure and content, coordinated with municipalities and other external stakeholders, conducted the pre and post program surveys, and prepared program materials. Christina Radvak, an alumna of the 2nd cohort that took place in 2020, joined to support the facilitation team as an Alumni Facilitator. Together, the facilitation team designed, organized, and delivered the sessions, shaped the project phase, and supported participants by answering questions, guiding them through activities, and acting as a resource of professional and lived experience.



**Hassan**



**Raksh**



**Christina**

# PROMOTION, APPLICATION, AND SELECTION

The opportunity to participate in the 2024 North Shore Young Civic Forum was promoted online, on posters, through word of mouth and via various media. Posts on various social media platforms, including Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter), generated hundreds of likes, dozens of comments, and thousands of impressions. Over fifty local organizations were engaged in promotional efforts, including libraries, educational institutions, retail stores, restaurants, breweries, non-profit organizations, local government offices, recreational centres, cultural institutions, and more. Dozens of organizations and local businesses spread the word online and hung posters in their business areas or staff rooms. [An article in the North Shore News](#) also helped promote the Forum. Based on Forum participant responses in the welcome survey, the most effective forms of promotion were posting on social media, word-of-mouth, and the newspaper article in the North Shore News.

Out of a record 67 applications, the facilitation team selected 26 participants from a variety of backgrounds to participate in the 2024 Forum. Selection criteria included a range of factors including education, profession, disability, belonging to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and racialized status. In selecting participants, Forum Facilitators aimed for a cohort that reflected the diversity of the people who live on the North Shore.

**North Shore News article written by Mina Kerr-Lazenby on the North Shore Young Civic Forum**

## Under 40 and interested in local issues? This North Shore politics forum is for you

The North Shore Young Citizens' Forum is now accepting applications for its 2024 cohort



Mina Kerr-Lazenby, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Dec 14, 2023 10:11 AM



The forum helps participants gain better understanding of the ins and outs of the North Vancouver City and District governments and the District of West Vancouver. | Cindy Goodman / North Shore News files



Listen to this article  
00:04:14

The fourth iteration of the North Shore Young Citizens' Forum, an initiative to get those on the North Shore aged 18 to 39 more involved in local politics, is now accepting applications for its 2024 cohort.

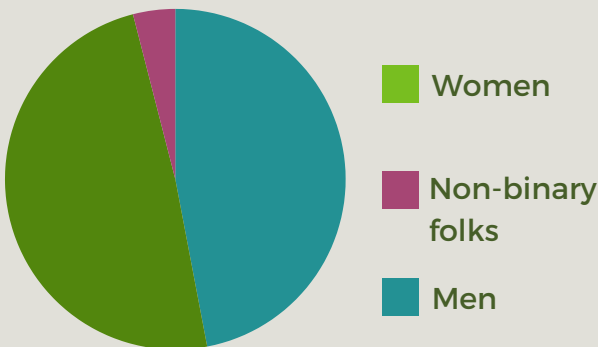
The forum, running from the beginning of February to mid-May 2024, sees participants gain better understanding of the ins and outs of governmental work in North Vancouver city and district and the District of West Vancouver via a series of workshops.

# COHORT DIVERSITY

The cohort of NSYCF 4.0 brought together a diverse group of young people from across the North Shore. The program was designed for younger adults aged 18-39 who live, work, or study on the North Shore. We chose this age range to recognize that there are many younger adults who would not be considered “youth” (upper age limit of 30) who face participation challenges. Our intention was to include adults who may have launched their careers or who have young families and would like to participate more in local government initiatives and conversations but find it challenging to do so.

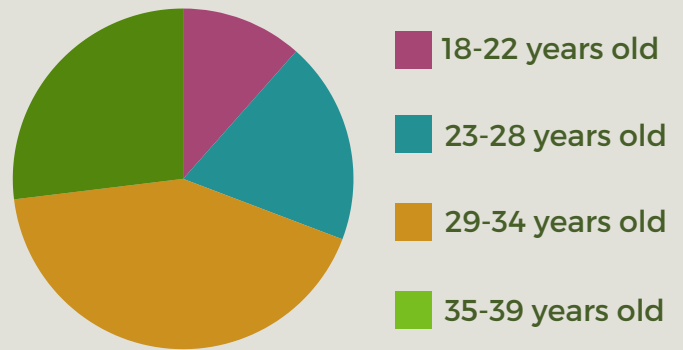
For bios of the 2024 North Shore Young Civic Forum participants, please [visit NSCR’s website](#)

## Gender:



## Age:

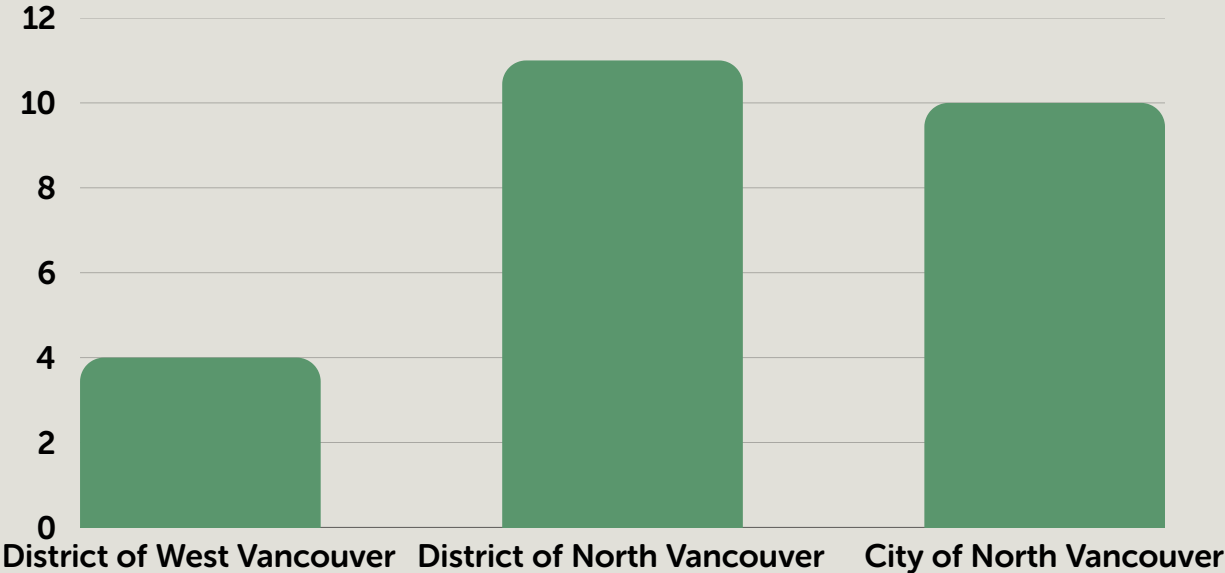
The average age of the cohort was 30 years old, with 14 participants over 30 and 12 under 30. This cohort was highly educated and older than previous years with more parent participants.



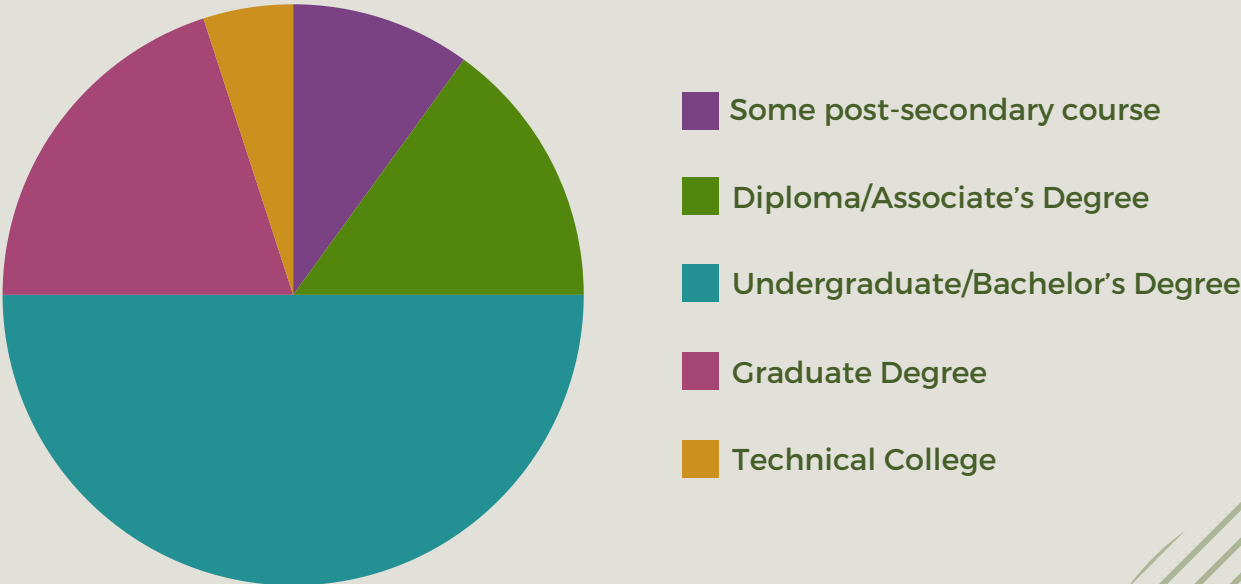
Although few of the applications came from West Vancouver, facilitators tried to ensure as equal representation as possible from the three municipalities, offering spots in the program to almost every applicant living in West Vancouver and giving preference to applicants from North Vancouver that worked in West Vancouver. The Forum works hard to recruit applicants from the District of West Vancouver with assistance from our many partners. But it is difficult and a recurring challenge due to the significant lower number of younger adults in West Vancouver.

# COHORT DIVERSITY

## Participant Municipality Residence:



## Educational Background:



# PROGRAM PHASES

There were three distinct phases of the Forum: the Learning Phase, the Project Phase, and the Presentation Phase.



## 1. THE LEARNING PHASE

The Learning Phase took place from the start of the Forum in mid-February until mid-April. This phase encapsulated the first six sessions, which covered:

- Municipalities: their roles, responsibilities, functions, structures, and relationships
- First Nations and their relationships with municipal governments on the North Shore
- Advocacy and its role in civic engagement and decision-making at the municipal level on the North Shore

## 2. THE PROJECT PHASE

The Project Phase of the Forum started at the Project Ideation Session in mid-April and went until late May/early June. Participants were put into municipality-based groups and selected a local issue of their choice that impacted young adults in their community. Groups were given four sessions to generate and work on their projects, as well as ample support from facilitators on a wide range of matters including project scope, support translating project goals into actionable policy recommendations, and presentation techniques.

Groups submitted project proposals to facilitators that summarized their project to ensure feasibility, relevance, and clarity. Groups were encouraged to use the SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound) framework to help guide the development of their projects.

## 2. THE PRESENTATION PHASE

The Presentation Phase took place from mid-June to mid-July during which each Forum group practiced their presentations and then presented their projects at a public meeting of their municipal council. Project groups each had a digital practice session to present their projects with a facilitator before their formal council presentations. This provided Forum participants with the opportunity to receive feedback on their projects and presentation while receiving tips and advice for effective public speaking and presenting before a municipal council.

# FORUM SESSIONS & WORKSHOPS

Drawing on their experience facilitating respectful dialogue, facilitators designed and delivered the sessions to be as inclusive as possible. Facilitators structured sessions and activities with the goal that every participant felt welcomed, included, and had many opportunities to fully engage with their cohort colleagues.

During sessions in the Learning Phase, facilitators designed exercises to encourage participants to think not only about problems and solutions to municipalities issues, but about how best to implement those solutions. Participants were given scenario-based exercises to get them thinking from the perspectives of municipal councillors and staff.

## SESSION 1: Introduction and Connecting

*Location: Capilano University*

In the first session, participants were introduced to the program, facilitators, and each other. This session focused on establishing a foundation for the program by fostering initial connections among participants and setting up community agreements to ensure a respectful, accountable, and engaging space for dialogue. The "Community Agreement" outlined guidelines for group behavior, emphasizing accountability, mutual respect, preparedness, respecting boundaries, appreciating diversity, and transparency. Key points included acting in good faith, effective communication, allowing for disagreement without blame, making space for everyone, respecting personal boundaries, non-judgmental behavior, open-mindedness, and being transparent and honest.





## SESSION 2: Municipalities 101

*Location: City of North Vancouver Municipal Hall*

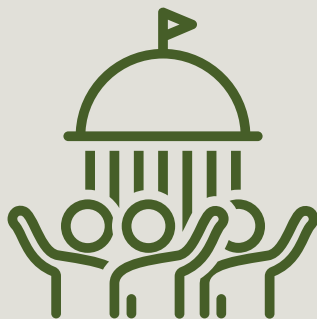
In the second session, participants learned about the roles and responsibilities of municipalities. Heather Evans and Rebecca Vaughan from CNV staff, as well as city councillors, provided insights into how municipalities function, including community planning, services offered, and municipal governance structures. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and explore the city's priorities. The discussions included an introduction to community engagement methods, municipal governance, and insights into CNV's Official Community Plan and ongoing initiatives.



## SESSION 3: Municipal Roles and Responsibilities

*Location: District of West Vancouver Municipal Hall*

The purpose of the third session was to introduce participants to the responsibilities of municipal governments and familiarize them with the operations of the District of West Vancouver (DWV). Participants learned about DWV municipal services such as engineering, transportation, and parks, culture, and community services. Councillor Sharon Thompson provided insights into her role at the Metro Vancouver Regional District. The session included a hands-on Civic Challenge Roleplay where participants worked in groups to address hypothetical municipal challenges, taking on roles such as City Planner, Financial Officer, and Sustainability Officer. This helped participants understand the complexities and decision-making processes within municipal operations.



## SESSION 4: Municipal Organizational Structure

*Location: District of North Vancouver Municipal Hall*

In the fourth session, participants explored the organizational structure of municipal governments, focusing specifically on the District of North Vancouver (DNV). Jason Smith, Senior Planner at DNV, along with Mayor Little, other council members and staff, provided an overview of DNV's organizational structure, the roles of various actors, and the responsibilities of municipal departments. Participants learned about DNV's current projects and priorities, with council members sharing their experiences and perspectives on civic engagement. Due to the complexity of planning and approval timelines, this session required careful coordination between facilitators and DNV staff.

## **SESSION 5: North Shore First Nations/Municipalities Relationship**

*Location: West Vancouver Community Centre*

The Forum's fifth session focused on the relationships between municipalities and First Nations governments on the North Shore. Representatives from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, including Kristen Touring, and the Squamish Nation, represented by Arthur Macapagal (Senior Manager - Governance and Council Operations), presented on the historical and current intergovernmental work between their nations and local municipalities. The session emphasized the significance of UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) principles and encouraged participants to think about ways to foster collaborative relationships. Participants were divided into groups to work on creating strategies for enhancing Indigenous-municipal relations, with an emphasis on respect, openness, humility, and mutual benefit.



## **SESSION 6: Advocacy Panel with Advocates & City Councillors**

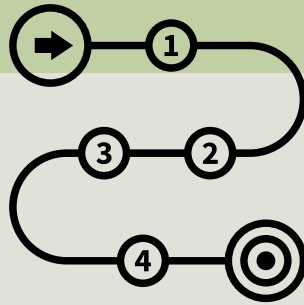
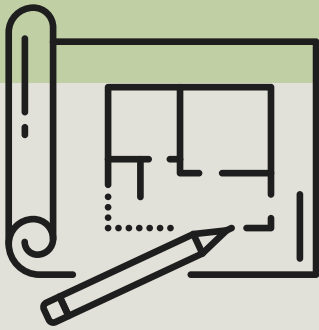
*Location: West Vancouver Community Centre*

In the sixth Forum session, participants were introduced to advocacy in municipal contexts through a panel discussion featuring local advocates and city councillors including Morag Keegan-Henry (New Majority, previously Force of Nature Field Organizer), Dr. Eoin Finn (Force of Nature, North Vancouver Team), Dana Mulhern (Positive Voices West Vancouver), Jordan Back (District of North Vancouver councillor), Jessica McIlroy (City of North Vancouver councillor), and Sharon Thompson (District of West Vancouver Councillor). The discussion covered strategies for effective advocacy, the dynamics between advocacy groups and municipal governments, and the challenges and opportunities involved. Following the panel discussion, participants engaged in an advocacy campaign breakout activity where they worked in groups to develop a draft strategy for an advocacy campaign focused on a specific municipal issue. This exercise allowed participants to apply the strategies and tools discussed during the panel to practical scenarios.

## SESSION 7: Project Launch and Ideation Session

*Location: Kiwanis Manor, DWV*

The seventh session marked the beginning of the project phase of the program and was held at Kiwanis Manor. Participants were grouped by their respective municipalities and engaged in brainstorming sessions to identify issues affecting young North Shore residents. The session focused on project identification, refining project ideas and identifying actionable steps. Participants used arts and crafts supplies and digital tools to visualize their brainstorming progress. The session concluded with participants selecting the topics they would work on, and each group developed a problem statement to clearly articulate the issue they aimed to address. This session emphasized collaboration, creativity, and community-focused problem-solving.



## SESSION 8: Project Development and Refinement

*Location: NSCR Community Room*

The eighth session was focused on giving groups dedicated time to work on their projects. Facilitators provided a detailed review of project guidelines, answered questions, and guided participants in refining their ideas. Groups worked on developing their project proposals, ensuring they aligned with SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound). Participants also took part in a fun letter-writing activity to engage with local politicians, which helped demystify the advocacy process. Throughout the session, facilitators circulated among the groups to provide support and feedback.

In the ninth session, participants continued working on their projects with a focus on presentation skills and project guidelines. The session, held at Kiwanis Manor, began with a presentation on the etiquette of presenting at city council meetings, including how to address councillors and present effectively. Groups then spent time refining their projects, focusing on presentation structure, clarity of their objectives, and how to articulate their “ask” to the council. Facilitators were available throughout to provide feedback and guidance, helping participants prepare for their final presentations to municipal councils.



## SESSION 9 & 10: Project Development and Refinement

*Location: Kiwanis Manor*

The tenth and final session was dedicated to finalizing the projects and practicing presentations. Participants worked on refining their projects, incorporating feedback from facilitators, and preparing to present their proposals to their respective municipal councils. This session included a practice run for presentations, allowing participants to build confidence and receive constructive feedback from facilitators and peers. The session emphasized presentation etiquette, effective communication of project goals, and readiness for formal council presentations. Participants also engaged in reflection exercises to review the entire process, their learnings, and the next steps for their civic engagement journey. This final preparation ensured that participants were well-equipped to present their projects and contribute meaningfully to their communities.



# PROJECT PORTFOLIO

The following lists the Forum participant groups and information about their projects with links to vide of their Council presentations.

## City of North Vancouver Group

**Members:** Sasha, Luke, Erin, Natalia, Ned, Ryker, Kevin, and Rosemary

**Topic:** Online Directory of Third Spaces in the City of North Vancouver

**Presentation Date:** June 24th, 2024

[Click here to watch the CNV Group's presentation to CNV Council](#)

## District of North Vancouver Group 1

**Members:** Julia, Camille, Danielle

**Topic:** District of North Vancouver Youth Housing Survey

**Presentation Date:** July 8th, 2024

[Click here to watch DNV Group 1's presentation to DNV Council](#)

## District of North Vancouver Group 2

**Members:** Paola, Meghan, Adam, JJ

**Topic:** Covered Third Spaces in the District of North Vancouver

**Presentation Date:** July 8th, 2024

[Click here to watch DNV Group 2's presentation to DNV Council](#)

## District of District Vancouver Group 1

**Members:** Nick, Ali, Sohail, Andrea

**Topic:** North Shore App and Podcast

**Presentation Date:** July 22nd, 2024

[Click here to watch DWV Group 1's presentation to DWV Council](#)

## District of District Vancouver Group 2

**Members:** Mitchell, Christine, Rohksane, Christina

**Topic:** Reconciliation in West Vancouver

**Presentation Date:** July 22nd, 2024

[Click here to watch DWV Group 2's presentation to DWV Council](#)





## OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

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All three municipal councils were appreciative of the groups' engagement and recommendations. Council members encouraged participants to stay engaged, contact them with their thoughts and ideas, and thanked participants for providing their perspectives during sessions and presentations.

Specifically, Councillor Nora Gambioli of the District of West Vancouver invited one of the groups that presented to the District of West Vancouver Council to attend an upcoming committee meeting to discuss reconciliation. Councillor Herman Mah of the District of North Vancouver, who was Acting Mayor during the meeting where the DNV groups presented to DNV Council, specifically requested the Forum to schedule a follow-up meeting with DNV Council.

Now that recommendations have been made to the three North Shore municipalities, participants can follow up with their respective councils to see if their municipalities will implement their recommendations. Future Forum cohorts could include reviews of previous NSYCF recommendations to councils and whether or not they have been implemented.

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# LEARNINGS AND LOOKING AHEAD

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## PROGRAM EVALUATION

The program had broad success in its two core goals: educating young adults about their municipal governments and providing a platform for participants to build relationships with municipal council members such that they are in a better position to influence local decision makers in the future.

### **Educating Young North Shore Residents About Their Municipal Governments**

In the post-program survey, although most respondents rated their knowledge of politics before the Forum as low, 100% of respondents reported they had greater knowledge and understanding about local government roles, responsibilities, and municipal processes after going through the Forum. 91% of Forum survey respondents also said they had more skills, capacity, and confidence to engage with local government officials. Respondents commented that going to the municipal halls, meeting government officials like councillors and staff, and hearing presentations from those officials was very useful.

The results and comments reflect the strength of the experiential education approach the Forum uses, as experiential learning allows learners to apply their knowledge and remove the gap between knowledge and action.

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## Engaging Young North Shore Residents With Their Municipal Governments

The Forum's success in increasing participants' engagement with their municipal governments was evident throughout the program. During the program and in the post-program survey, many participants remarked that they didn't know how much city councillors wanted to hear from them and how willing they were to meet with their constituents. Some participants reached out to a city councillor independently to meet up for coffee before the program had even ended.

In addition to visiting North Shore municipal halls and being in the environment where local governance takes place, iterative activities such as speaking with government officials and writing letters to them were helpful in respondents' learning.

The **post-program survey** for the North Shore Young Civic Forum provided a comprehensive overview of the program's impact on participants, particularly their understanding of municipal governance, their confidence to engage with local government officials, and their sense of community. The survey collected responses from a diverse group of participants, ranging from 18 to 39 years of age, with varied educational backgrounds.



### Knowledge Improvement

A key aspect assessed in the survey was participants' knowledge of government and politics before and after attending the Forum. Prior to the program, the majority of respondents rated their knowledge of municipal governance between 1 and 3 (on a scale of 1-5), with one participant rating it as 1 (lowest), six rating it as 2, and four rating it as 3. Several participants rated their prior knowledge as 4. These findings suggested that most participants had limited or moderate understanding of local governance before joining the Forum.

After participating in the program, there was a significant shift in participants' understanding of municipal governance. Notably, 100% of respondents reported having greater knowledge and understanding about local government roles, responsibilities, and municipal processes as a result of attending the Forum. Specifically, 60% of participants rated their post-program knowledge as 5 (highest) with 40% of participants rating it as 4. This marked improvement demonstrated the effectiveness of the program in enhancing participants' civic knowledge.



## Skills Development and Community Engagement

In addition to knowledge improvement, the Forum also helped participants develop essential skills and foster a sense of community. **87% of respondents** reported having more skills, capacity, and confidence to engage with local government officials due to their participation in the Forum. This increase in confidence was also reflected in participants' willingness to engage in civic matters, with **80% of respondents** stating that they were more motivated to engage with local government officials in the future.

Participants also reported feeling more connected to their community, with **87% indicating** an increased sense of community connection after completing the program. This sense of connection was further enhanced by learning about Indigenous governance. **80% of respondents** stated that they gained a better understanding of local First Nations and their relationships with municipal governments, highlighting the program's success in addressing reconciliation and fostering a greater understanding of Indigenous-municipal relations.

## Program Impact and Recommendations

The program's impact was further highlighted by the fact that **80% of respondents** said they would recommend the NSYCF to others. This statistic indicated strong overall satisfaction with the program and its ability to provide valuable insights into local governance. Participants praised the interactive elements of the Forum, particularly the direct engagement with councillors and municipal staff. These opportunities allowed participants to gain a deeper understanding of the workings of local governments, which they found invaluable.



## Participant Voices

Participants shared several positive reflections that captured the essence of the program's impact.

One participant noted:

**“ I had zero engagement with my municipal government in the past, and now I stay up-to-date on what council is working on and am even part of a committee. ”**

Another highlighted the inspiration and connection fostered through the program:

**“ It helped me connect the topics I'm interested in with areas of local government so I could see where my 'in' might be. I was also really inspired by other participants in the program, and it overall felt like a very encouraging and empowering environment. ”**

A participant emphasized their growing influence in community matters, stating:

**“ I feel like I have a stronger voice in what happens on the North Shore... ”**

The value of direct engagement was also noted:

**“ The sessions where we were able to speak directly with councillors and staff allowed insight into the specific workings of each municipality, which was invaluable. Continuing to bridge that gap for future cohorts is very important!**

**”**

Another participant reflected on the presentation aspect:

**“ The process of putting together a presentation and then moving forward with presenting to council was very helpful in recognizing how accessible municipal governments are.**

**”**

Not only did participants gain knowledge, but they also developed the skills and motivation needed to continue engaging with their community, demonstrating the long-term impact of the Forum. As a result, the Forum remains a vital initiative for empowering young residents to contribute meaningfully to municipal decision-making and community development on the North Shore.

# ACCESSIBILITY

For the first time since the inaugural cohort in 2019, the Forum was held entirely in-person. Although the second Forum cohort was held entirely online and the third cohort was a mix of in-person and online sessions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2024 Forum aimed to bring participants together in-person. This was done to facilitate participant access to municipal halls and venues that have a public purpose to facilitate collaborative work. We also wanted to facilitate relationships both between Forum participants as well between participants and municipal councillors, staff and other guest speakers. In-person events significantly enhance connection and creativity between people.

Sessions 5 and 6 were converted to hybrid sessions out of necessity due to a significant amount of participants either being ill or unavailable to attend in-person. While the third iteration of the Forum saw a great desire for in-person interaction coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the fourth cohort preferred flexibility for the demands of participants' busy professional and personal lives.

Facilitators were as open and transparent as possible about their intentions to create a safe, welcoming space where people of different backgrounds and experiences could learn and participate. Acknowledging and analyzing how discrimination, harassment, and exclusion practices of the past and present have prevented people from marginalized groups from participating in public processes that was led by both participants and facilitators.

Participants were asked about barriers to participation and any accommodations they might need before and during the Forum. Facilitators provided various accommodations to overcome barriers including selecting locations that had free parking and were close to transit centres. The Forum provided food to participants at each session, accommodating participants' diverse dietary restrictions and preferences. Child care subsidies were also offered. The facilitation team also made slide show presentations available to participants afterward when possible to accommodate accessibility needs.



# SPECIAL THANKS

For the North Shore Young Civic Forum to be successful, NSCR relies on the goodwill and contributions of many individuals and organizations on the North Shore to empower younger adults with skills and capacity to influence local government decision making. We would like to thank the following organizations and individuals whose support made the Forum possible.

## KIWANIS SENIORS HOUSING SOCIETY



Susanna Ordonez and Brendan Stonestreet - Office Manager Office Manager - Kiwanis North Shore Housing Society

## WEST VANCOUVER COMMUNITY CENTRE



Lenna Nakamura, Community Recreation Manager for Youth Services, Aquatics, and Health and Wellness

## CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER



Heather Evans, Community Planner

Karla Graham - Corporate Officer

Rebecca Vaughan - Staff

Julie Peters - Manager, Legislative & Election Services, City Clerk's Office

Sean Galloway - Director of Planning and Development

Renee de St. Croix - (Former) Manager of Long Range and Community Planning

Blair Underhill- Planner 2

Amelia Cifarelli - City Clerk

Donna Powers - Senior Manager, Communications & Engagement

Councillor Don Bell - City of North Vancouver Councillor

Councillor Shervin Shahriari - City of North Vancouver Councillor

Councillor Jessica McIlroy - City of North Vancouver Councillor

## **DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER**



Mayor Mike Little - Mayor of the District of North Vancouver

Councillor Jordan Back - District of North Vancouver Councillor

Councillor Catherine Pope - District of North Vancouver Councillor

Councillor Herman Mah - District of North Vancouver Councillor

Councillor Betty Forbes - District of North Vancouver Councillor

Jason Smith - Senior Planner, District of North Vancouver

## **DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER**



Mayor Mark Sager - Mayor of the District of West Vancouver.

Councillor Sharon Thompson - District of West Vancouver Councillor

Councillor Nora Gambioli - District of West Vancouver Councillor

Maeve Bermingham - Community Planner - District of West Vancouver

## **ADDITIONAL THANKS TO**

Daniel Levangie - Associate Vice-President Student Success at Capilano University

North Shore Community Resources Society

Murray Mollard - Executive Director at NSCR

Amanda King - Relationship Manager, Tsleil-Waututh Nation

Kevin O'Neill - Senior Relationship Specialist, Tsleil-Waututh Nation

Arthur Macapagal - Senior Manager, Governance and Council Operations, Squamish Nation

Morag Keegan-Henry - Advocate with New Majority Force of Nature Field Organizer, North Vancouver Team

Dana Mulhern - Positive Voices West Vancouver advocate

Eoin Finn - Advocate with Force of Nature, North Vancouver Team

Ashraf Amlani - Co-Founder and COO Co-Founder and COO - BUNYAAD Public Affairs

# THANKS TO OUR PROGRAM SPONSORS

Special thanks goes to our program sponsors for supporting the program. Without their support, the Forum could not achieve its mission empowering young adults to be more engaged with their governments on the North Shore.

The program sponsors had no role in the design or delivery of the program. The facilitation team had full independence to design, shape, and facilitate the program in the way they felt best accomplished the program's goals of educating and engaging young people on the North Shore. Participants were similarly free to research and work on whichever issues they wanted.





## **ABOUT NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY RESOURCES (NSCR)**

Founded in 1976, NSCR is a registered not-for-profit charitable organization serving the community on the North Shore, Bowen Island and Lions Bay. Our mandate is to design and deliver programs and services that enhance well-being, social connections, empowerment and community participation. We provide a wide range of services to a diverse mix of clients and the public.

The North Shore Young Citizens' Forum is a project of NSCR's Democracy Café program, which is a platform for local residents and citizens to learn about and engage more fully in the democratic life of our communities.

For more information on NSCR programs and services, visit us at <http://www.nscr.ca>.

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